

Promotion of Upgrade Black Sea SCENE among NGO partners

The Black Sea NGO Network has disseminated information about the Upgrade Black Sea SCENE online metadata network service of marine environmental institutes and organizations from the Black Sea countries to networking NGO partners from the six coastal countries. The BSNN team prepared a review of the project with account of the networking activities and the metadata services and circulated it to interested experts and associates. This activity is a step toward wider involvement of scientists and NGO experts from the wider regional public in the utilization, population and support to the infrastructure created by the Upgrade Black Sea SCENE project and its predecessor.



The participants realize that networking and exchange between national and regional institutes holding marine data is of great importance for a wide range of scientific, management and other purposes. Hence the significance of the promotion of a coherent scientific research infrastructure of 51 networking partners, holders of marine data, from the Black Sea countries and the EU. This metadata infrastructure is best known as the BlackSeaScene.net (www.blackseascene.net) currently supported by the FP7 project Upgrade

Black Sea Scene. Building and extending the existing research infrastructure and adopting common communication standards and adapted technologies with the SeaDataNet (<http://www.seadatanet.org/>) has ensured the datacenters interoperability and on-line access to in-situ and remote sensing data, meta-data and products. The project will enhance the exchange of scientific knowledge, and regional cooperation of institutes for environmental problems and better protection, rehabilitation and sustainable development of the Black Sea ecosystem.

Earth Day message

Data about the Earth should be widely available to assist management and experts in their tasks. This was the central message of the 2011 awareness events of the Black Sea NGO Network, marking Earth Day. The regional team in Varna held two awareness events and promoted the UBSS project through distribution of project fliers among journalists, students, teachers and NGO activists. The public was alerted on the necessity to have data of the Earth readily available and easily accessible by the variety of stakeholders.



The campaign made a review of the UN Year of Biodiversity and focused on some messages of the current UN International Year of Forests.

Marine policy, fisheries policy and the overall long-term management of environmental resources were given a lot of attention as well. The availability and use of data in the process of sound natural resource management is becoming an important area of expertise for the networking partners. As result of the activities the UBSS has been introduced to a significant number of stakeholders from the wider community.



Upgrade Black Sea SCENE meeting - Rhodes, Greece, April 2011

Society and politicians need environmental data

The European Maritime Day 2011 was marked by the Black Sea NGO Network with a series of information events in May. The focus of the information materials was to show the importance of the sea and oceans for everyday life of both coastal communities and the wider public across the country. They highlighted the opportunities and challenges currently facing maritime regions and sectors. One of the topics discussed at an expert and media meeting in Varna on May 11, 2011 was the availability and utilization of environmental data. The speakers were unanimous that data should be widely available to deliver the latest developments in the world of research and warn the public of developments and tendencies. Mr. Aleksandar Shivarov, BSNN expert, delivered a presentation about the use of the metadata infrastructure best known as the BlackSeaScene.net (www.blackseascene.net) currently supported by the FP7 project Upgrade Black Sea Scene. He stressed on the significance to harmonize the European research data more widely and to adopt common data standards. Building and extending the existing research infrastructure and adopting common communication standards and adapted technologies with the SeaDataNet

(<http://www.seadatanet.org/>) has ensured the UBSS datacenters interoperability and on-line access to in-situ and remote sensing data, meta-data and products, he explained. The project will enhance common understanding of issues of the protection, rehabilitation and sustainable development of the Black Sea and its ecosystem. Promotion and dissemination of Up-grade Black Sea SCENE has been carried out dissemination of fliers and display of a poster at press conference and two NGO outdoor activities.



Promotion of UBSS within the European Fish Week 2011

The Institute of Fish Resources and Aquarium — Varna in cooperation with the Black Sea NGO Network marked the European Fish Week 2011 and World Ocean Day 8 June with open doors and public discussion on important aspects of the environmental health of the Ocean and the Black Sea and their fisheries. With strong media support, the partners addressed the public stressing on the significance of joint efforts and policy measures to halt the degradation of the marine environment and its resources. Several thematic spots during the day addressed issues of sustainable use of seas and oceans, climate change, marine biodiversity conservation and the reform in the EU Common Fisheries Policy and the effort to halt overfishing and end destructive fishing practices thus making a fair and equitable use of healthy fish stocks.

The Black Sea NGO Network disseminated 60 brochures of the UBSS project to participants in the events and visitors to the aquarium. A presentation of the UBSS project was included in the thematic discussions about the significance of collecting, managing, interpreting and disseminating scientific information and involving

scientists in communicating messages to decision makers.



Best practices in dissemination of information

On 24 and 25 June 2011 the Black Sea NGO Network held an expert meeting within a regional project entitled 'Regional Exchange of Best Practices in Influencing the Public Sector' supported by the Black Sea Trust, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. The event was attended by two Russian activists: Tatyana Lysenko of Environmental Watch on North Caucasus, Maykop and Tatyana Tribat of Aqua, Environmental Education Youth Center of Novorossiysk.



The exchange of information and the comparison of experience were very useful to both sides. 28 NGO representatives and 3 media were involved in the meeting, providing review of best practices, cross-border projects, previous experience in campaigning, protocols of information and decision making while campaigning etc. The best practices outlined were associated with ICZM, influence on administrations on issues of planning,

environmental protection, introduction of best agricultural practices, informal and non-formal education, monitoring of the legal system, improvement of the access to information on public issues etc. Promotion and dissemination of Upgrade Black Sea SCENE has been carried out with poster and leaflets for all participants. Communication and involvement of scientists and NGOs in the promotion and dissemination of information was identified as one of the project's best practices.

Black Sea Outlook

The Third Bi-annual Black Sea Scientific Conference and Upgrade Black Sea Scene Project joint event was held in Odessa, Ukraine 1-4 November 2011. The events supported by the project included also Black Sea Day celebrations with round table on October 31, 2011. The round table brought together eminent scientists and representatives of the national and regional government of Ukraine, the Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission and the European Union, as well as numerous representatives of the public. Regional environmental policy and integrated maritime policy were discussed along with the prospects for the development of cooperation across national borders. Black Sea Medals for exclusive achievements and contribution to Black Sea science and environmental protection were awarded to scientists and experts from the six coastal countries.

The Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) has been promoting the 3rd Bi-annual Black Sea Scientific and Upgrade Black Sea SCENE Joint Conference throughout the period of its preparation and implementation. The conference entitled 'Black Sea Outlook' – Drivers, pressures, state, impact, and response and recovery indications toward better governance of Black Sea environmental protection' was held in Odessa, Ukraine 1 – 4 November 2011. Co-organizers of the event were the Black Sea Commission, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine, the UP GRADE Black Sea Scientific network with support of the EC FP7 Project and the Ukrainian Scientific Centre of Ecology of the Sea.

The BSNN focused the promotional efforts of its team on members of the scientific community in the coastal states. A good number of scientists are members of environmental NGOs.

Information about the conference has been disseminated at some conferences, meetings and seminars both national and international. The network members disseminated information about the conference to their members and scientific advisers. Five participants – 2 from Ukraine, 2 from the Russian Federation and 1 from Bulgaria – attended the Black Sea Outlook Conference in Odessa with support from the BSNN. All of them were closely involved in the Conference activities and in the dissemination of information about the Upgrade Black Sea SCENE online metadata network service. This activity is a step toward wider involvement of scientists and NGO activists and experts from the wider regional public in the utilization, population and support to the infrastructure created by the Upgrade Black Sea SCENE project and its predecessor.

The 'Black Sea Outlook' also provided a regional focus on public awareness activities on Black Sea issues. Organizations in Ukraine hosting the Conference and the events marking International Black Sea Day 2011 organized a forum for discussion of topical Black Sea scientific and public issues. Over 30 NGO activists and volunteers were involved in the awareness events.



Black Sea Medal 2011 holders (L to R) Prof. Radu Mihnea, NIMRD Grigore Antipa, Romania, Prof. Snejana Moncheva, Deputy Director and Head of the Department "Marine Biology and Ecology" at the Institute of Oceanology-BAS, Bulgaria, Viktor Karamushka, government expert, Ukraine, Prof. Ahmet Kideish, Middle East Technical University, Turkey

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